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Xmas 1860

CHARLES C. AND EMILINE SESSIONS THOMAS

Charles Carter Thomas was born September 16, 1839, son of Charles Thomas and Elizabeth Carter, and died January 21, 1919.

He married Emiline Sessions on December 25, 1960, at Heber. She was the daughter of Richard and Lucretia Haws Sessions and was born May 1, 1840, at Wayne County, Illinois. She died October 6, 1906.

Emeline Sessions Thomas was one of the oldest residents of Heber, having come here with her parents in 1859. She was among the very first to settle in this peaceful little valley, nestled among the hills of the lofty Wasatch mountains. She was then a maiden of 19 years.

The next year, on Christmas Day (Dec. 25, 1860), she was married to Charles C. Thomas by Thomas Rasband. This was the first wedding solemnized in this county.

She was born on May 1, 1840, in Wayne County, Illinois, crossing the plains in 1850 in James Pace's company, with her mother and seven brothers and sisters. Her father and brother, John and Bradford Sessions, were members of the Mormon Battalion, which on July 20, 1846, bade farewell to their families and friends at Mount Pisgah, to make that long tramp across the western desert to California.

Mr. Thomas came to Utah on September 9, 1852, in Bryant Jolley's company. He was a member of the Nauvoo Legion, and took part in the Echo Canyon trouble and was an Indian war veteran.

Children of Charles C. Thomas: Charles Richard, William Jacob, Elizabeth Lucretia (Mrs. George Milton Pace), John Alex-

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ander, Heben Louisa (Mrs. George Henry Prescott), James Earlton, Ada Emiline, George Bradford and Eliza Melissa (Mrs. Ira Pierson).

Dirt floors, dirt roofs and mud packed between the logs were the order of the day.

When the crops were planted and the log huts prepared, the men left the valley and went back to Provo where happy families greeted them with shouts of "How's the weather?" and "When are we going?"

With wives, children, cows, pigs, chickens and all their earthly possessions packed, the original company started out and were joined by others who were cheered by the reports of a good summer and plenty of farming land and irrigation water. Some of the additional families who came were Thomas H. Giles, John Giles, Hiram Oaks and George Carlile.

During that first summer, some 1,000 bushels of grain were raised in the valley. Though some of the wheat crop was injured by early frost, it could still be made into flour and the settlers rejoiced for the blessings of the harvest. Because the nearest gristmill was in Provo and a four-days' journey away, many of the people ground flour in small hand mills or boiled the wheat and ate it whole with milk.

With the crops in and summer on the wane, dread winter again loomed up before the people. Farming efforts had been to raise wheat and other crops to sustain human life, and so before winter came it was necessary to cut meadow hay and swamp grass for cattle wherever it could be found. All of it had to be cut by hand with a scythe, which proved to be the hardest work of the summer.

Many of the men who had come to the valley during the summer and raised their crops decided that they would return to Provo for the winter rather than provide hay for their cattle and be shut out from the rest of the world for the long winter months.

However, 18 families had cast their lot with Provo Valley and through the winter they stayed. These families, according to the journal of John Crook, were Thomas Rasband, John Crook, Charles N. Carroll, John Jordan, Alexander Sessions, Bradford Sessions, Hiram Oaks, John Lee, Richard Jones, James Davis, William Davidson, James Laird, John Sessions, Elisha Thomas, James Carlile and George Carlile. Jane Clotworthy and Elizabeth Carlile were both widows. Charles C. Thomas, unmarried, lived with his brother Elisha. No record is made of the exact number of women and children.

The first birth among the settlers in the valley occurred in November. The child, a daughter of William Davidson and his wife, Ellen, was named Timpanogos, the Indian name for the valley and the prominent mountain that lay at the west.

For those who remained, the first winter in the valley was a long and dreary one. The snow fell early and was several feet deep. For nearly four months they were without communication from the rest of the world.

At Christmas time, however, a group of young people from Provo braved the weather and came through the canyon by sleigh and spent the holiday season with the families in the valley. They soon left and no one else came into the valley until the snows melted.

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to the valley. It was small and threshed very slowly, using horses as its source of power. When the grain had been through the machine it still had to be run through a fanning mill to separate the kernels from the chaff. This mill was hand operated and also very slow. As a result, some of the grain did not get harvested before winter set in.

The prospects of winter seemed less bleak that year for there were many more people in the valley and more adequate preparations had been made. To help the time pass more quickly, a dramatics group was organized. Some very good plays were produced with John Crook, James Duke, C. N. Carroll, John Galligher and John Jordan taking the leads.

The saints also could look forward to regular Church services on Sundays in their new meeting house. A choir was organized to help with the music and John Crook, talented in many lines, served as the choir leader.



JOHN CROOK
Original Settler and Early Historian

Schools were also conducted during the winter months for the education of the people. John M. Young was the first school teacher and the classes were held in the meeting house with students sitting on rough benches or stools using make-shift desks fastened to the walls.

There were other interests in the new valley, too, for the records show that on Christmas Day, 1860, Charles C. Thomas claimed as his bride, Emmaline Sessions. They were married by Thomas Rasband in the first ceremony to be performed in the valley. That evening another couple, Harvey Meeks and a Miss Dougal were married at Center Creek by Silas Smith.

Charles Carter ^{ca} Thomas

cabin { 49 John Barton Moulton
50 of



Thomas Cabin
located in field south of John
Barton Moulton home.

John Barton Moulton Place 1st
owned by Chas Thomas

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Thomas

↓
Thomas Place

↓
Milton Place

↓
John Barton Moulton
purchased — acres from
admiral Moulton

↓
John Gray Anderson